

## Claims

### WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of updating computer software and/or data in a recipient computer comprising the steps of:

said recipient computer sending an update request as an e-mail message to an owner computer;

said owner computer analysing the update request and preparing a corresponding update response;

said owner computer sending said update response as an e-mail message to said recipient computer; and

said recipient computer responding to said update response by updating said software and/or data.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the update request is compiled at the recipient computer by reference to a data directory, and the update response is compiled at the owner computer by reference to the same data directory, only files identified in the update request being updated in the update response.

3. A method as claimed in claim 2 in which said files updated in the update response are sent as attachment files in said e-mail message.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the update response is protected by a password.

5. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the e-mail update request is transmitted via the internet.

6. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the recipient computer is protected by a fire-wall through which it communicates in sending said e-mail update request.

7. A method as claimed in claim 1 in which the computer software and/or data to be updated consists of one of a virus signature, a software application or data to be backed-up by the owner computer.